

Whereas, Glenna Black has remained active among her community and friends; and

Whereas, Glenna Black has exemplified a life of love and dedication to all of her family and friends.

Therefore, I join with the family and friends of Glenna and the residents of the entire 18th Congressional District of Ohio in wishing Glenna Black a very happy 92nd birthday.

SIKHS ARRESTED FOR RAISING FLAG ARE DENIED BAIL

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on January 26, India celebrated its Republic Day, the anniversary of the adoption of its constitution. On that day a group of Sikh activists raised the Sikh flag at a Gurdwara in the city of Amritsar in accordance with Sikh tradition. For this, complaints were issued against 35 Sikhs and 31 have been arrested.

Now eleven of them have had their bail denied, keeping them in detention. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ruled that speaking out for Khalistan is not a crime, yet they are charged with "sedition" and "making inflammatory speeches" for raising a flag and speaking out for freedom for the Sikh homeland.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of democracy is this? The Movement Against State Repression (MASR) was already reporting that India held 52,268 political prisoners. These activists add 11 to that number.

This is just the latest illustration that exercising your freedom of speech can be a very dangerous thing in India if you are a minority. India has a pattern of repression. It has killed over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Kashmiri Muslims, thousands of other Christians and Muslims throughout the country, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits (the aboriginal people of South Asia), Manipuris, Tamils, and others. The U.S. State Department reported in 1994 that the Indian government had paid over 41,000 cash bounties to police officers for killing Sikhs. One such bounty went to an officer who killed a three-year-old boy.

We must not just sit and watch while a country that proclaims itself "the world's largest democracy" tramples on the most basic of democratic freedoms, such as the freedom to speak out and to hold a peaceful demonstration. That is not the hallmark of a democracy. It is the hallmark of a police state.

The time has come to let India know that we are watching and to let them know that this is unacceptable.

There are steps that we can take to support the rights of all people in south Asia. It is time that we take these steps. They include cutting off our aid and trade with India and putting the Congress on record in support of self-determination for the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, the Christian people of Nagaland, the Kashmiris, and all the people of South Asia who are seeking freedom. Only by exercising

their right to self-determination, which is the essence of democracy, can the people there finally live in freedom, peace, and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's very informative press release on the denial of bail to these Sikh activists into the RECORD at this time.

[From Council of Khalistan]

BAIL DENIED FOR 11 SIKHS ARRESTED FOR HOISTING SIKH FLAG IN AMRITSAR—IS THIS DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM OF SPEECH?

Eleven Sikhs who were arrested for raising the Sikh flag on Republic Day, January 26, have been denied bail. Thirty-five Sikhs were charged and 31 are being held. They raised the saffron flag of Khalsa Raj at Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj in Amritsar. They have been charged with sedition and "making inflammatory speeches." Khalsa Raj Party President Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan said that they had raised the flag according to Sikh tradition.

Punjab Pradesh Congress Party President Hanspal said, "We will not allow them to raise their heads for Khalistan." Maninder Singh Bitta, President of the All-India Youth Congress, demanded that Dr. Chohan and others be deported to Pakistan, claiming they are Pakistani agents. Former Chief Minister Badal said, "We will not permit the militancy to raise its head again."

"How can India call itself democratic when it suppresses a basic right like freedom of speech?" said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh struggle for freedom. "The Punjab and Haryana High Court has already ruled in the case of the late Colonel Partap Singh that speaking in support of freedom for Khalistan is not a crime," Dr. Aulakh said. "How can these activists be arrested for something that is not a crime?"

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, Dalits, Bodos, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs and tens of thousands of other minorities are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! We demand the immediate release of all these political prisoners.

"The Sikh Nation is indebted to the leaders of Dal Khalsa who raised the Sikh flag, including Harcharan Singh Dhami, President, Kanwarpal Singh Bittu, General Secretary, Satnam Singh Paonta Sahib, and others," said Dr. Aulakh. "We praise Dr. Chohan for his remarks. But how can Sikhs like Badal, Hanspal, Bitta, and others call themselves Sikhs when they deny the Sikh aspirations for freedom? Clearly, they are doing the bidding of the Indian government, which controls them."

The Sikh Nation declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987 and formed the Council of Khalistan at that time to lead the struggle for independence. When India became independent, Sikhs were equal partners in the transfer of power and were to receive their own state, but the weak and ignorant Sikh leaders of the time were tricked into staying with India on the promise that they would have "the glow of freedom" and no law affecting the Sikhs would pass without their consent. Sikhs ruled an independent and sovereign Punjab from 1710 to 1716 and again from 1765 to 1849 and were recognized

by most of the countries of the world at that time. Sikhs do not accept the Indian constitution. No Sikh representative has ever signed it.

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. Khalra was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. No one has been brought to justice for the kidnapping and murder of Jaswant Singh Khalra. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. He has never been tried for the Jathedar Kaunke murder. In 1994, the U.S. State Department reported that the Indian government had paid over 41,000 cash bounties for killing Sikhs.

India is not one country; it is a polyglot thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. Last year, the Punjab Legislative Assembly passed a bill cancelling the government's daylight robbery of Punjab river water. The Assembly explicitly stated the sovereignty of Punjab.

"I urge the international community to help us free Khalistan from Indian occupation," Dr. Aulakh said. "Freedom is the birthright of all people and nations," he said. "The arrest and denial of bail for these activists for raising the Sikh flag and making speeches shows that there is no freedom for Sikhs within India," he said. "As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh,'" Dr. Aulakh noted. "We must continue to press for freedom," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish. A sovereign Khalistan is essential for the survival of the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation."

LEADER IN EDUCATION

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 15, 2005

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Rutherford "Bud" Gaston, Sr., of Fresno, California. Bud has received many noted awards throughout the years and most recently he is a recipient of the Kremen School of Education and Human Development "Noted Alumni Award".

Mr. Gaston was born in Georgia, but attended high school in Brakenridge, Pennsylvania where he graduated from Har Brack High School. Then Bud moved to Fresno, where he attended California State University, Fresno and received a Bachelor's degree in Education, and a Master's Degree in Education Administration.

Bud joined Fresno Unified School District in 1953 as a teacher at Columbia School. After ten years, he became Principal of Tielman and Emerson Elementary School, and stayed with Fresno Unified until he retired in 1986.

Beyond his scholastic achievements, Mr. Gaston has also served the country well. He gave the United States Army five years of service and moved up the ranks to become